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ABSTRACT

The 11 documents and articles in this annotated bibliography provide administrators with sources from which to obtain a basic understanding of the current status of conflict resolution theory and practice as it applies to education. Not all the entries are taken directly from the education literature; the references include information from psychology, sociology, political science, and management science. (IRT)

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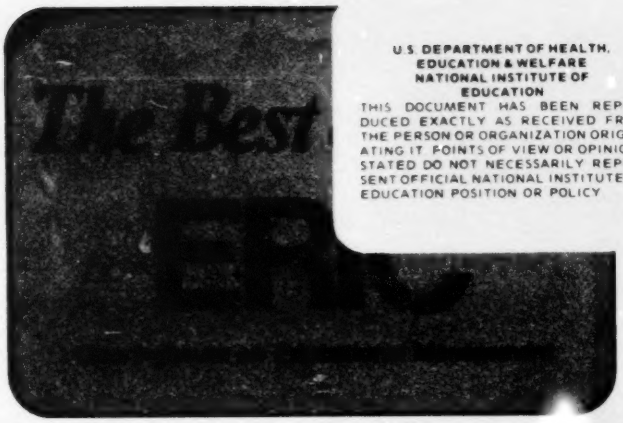

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Number 10 June 1975

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give the practicing educator easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

Materials were selected for inclusion from the ERIC catalogs *Resources in Education (RIE)* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*.

This bibliography was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the Association of California School Administrators.

Conflict Resolution

Bailey, Stephen K. "Preparing Educational Administrators for Conflict Resolution." Address to American Educational Research Association annual meeting, New York, February 1971. 20 pages. ED 048 646.

Bailey's paper is one of the most intelligently written works on conflict in education administration. He deals with the difficulty in training education administrators to come to terms with conflict, noting that the only way to learn is by doing.

Bailey outlines five characteristics of "a successful conflict manager in the field of education." First, he is aware of the problems faced by all segments of his constituency—students, teachers, "the oppressed, and the sensitive." Second, he must be "harshly realistic" about his own personal and role limitations. Third, he should be careful to use "collective judgments" in place of his own personal ones. When confronted with a "crisis-type conflict" he should carefully estimate his own and his "enemy's" resources and follow a specific plan of resolution. And finally, he should realize that some conflicts do not lend themselves to his well-intentioned management and should be prepared to wait out the storm.

Bailey points out the value of generating a "typology" of conflicts instead of attempting to rigidly define them. Typologies, according to this author, are flexible, permitting variations that strict definitions do not permit, and enabling the administrator using them to be flexible as well. He suggests four typologies of conflict: (1) subordinate, superordinate, and lateral conflicts; (2) "horizontal" and "vertical" conflicts; (3) constructive and destructive conflicts; and (4) "the severity or quality of conflict." He points out that other classes (typologies) can also be useful to the administrator attempting to generate viable resolutions to school conflicts.

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Barnes, Roland E. ***Understanding the Nature of Conflict: A Neglected Dimension in Educational Administration.*** Pittsburgh: Center for the Study of Desegregation and Conflict, University of Pittsburgh, 1974. 17 pages. ED 091 861.

Pointing out that "rarely is any intensive attention given to understanding the nature of conflict," Barnes intends in this booklet to present "a knowledge base" designed to show school administrators that the conflicts they face in daily administration are not unique, and that they can learn from both conflict theory and from conflicts faced by other institutions.

The training of school administrators infrequently includes direct acquaintance with the means of managing and resolving conflicts. But, as Barnes points out, in almost all administrative situations, "the decision maker is faced with conflict—either potential or actual." To prepare administrators to come to terms with conflicts, Barnes recommends that they be exposed, through gaming and simulation, to the kinds of conflict situations that they may encounter as school administrators.

Although his outline of the nature and dynamics of social conflict is sketchy, Barnes is correct in emphasizing theory of conflict—theory generated not by educators, but by social and political scientists. In drawing on this body of knowledge from fields closely related to education, Barnes' booklet is rather unusual among education documents on conflict, and it is valuable because it avoids the simplistic approach of some of that literature.

Barnes' paper contains a brief annotated bibliography including some of the more outstanding works on conflict from fields other than education.

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Gilroy, Thomas P., ed. *Dispute Settlement in the Public Sector. Research Series 1.* Iowa City: Center for Labor and Management, Iowa University, 1972. 64 pages. ED 060 565.

As an increasing number of state statutes allow for public sector collective bargaining, public officials are justifiably concerned with the effects that bargaining can have on the functioning of such institutions as the schools. The effectiveness of various types of dispute settlement are "drawing increasing attention," according to this publication. Its four articles deal with compulsory arbitration, "finality" in dispute settlement where strike is not allowed, representation and the establishment of bargaining units, and principles of effective conflict resolution.

In the last article, Harold Davey points out that public negotiators can learn "something of value" from the private sector labor relations experience. He lists seven "basic principles" of conflict resolution in collective bargaining situations. Included among these principles are the realization that "certain types of conflict situations are *normal* and *natural* in collective bargaining"; "recognition that conflict resolution is a complex, difficult task in most employer-union relationships"; and recognition that "a 'good' settlement is one from which both parties justifiably feel they have gained something valuable from all the travail they have experienced."

This publication is interesting because it deals with one of the most formalized means of expressing and resolving conflict—collective bargaining. And school administrators should be aware of the implications of such an increasingly prevalent process.

Order copies from Center for Labor and Management, College of Business Administration, Phillips Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. $3.00.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $3.32. Specify ED number.

Lytle, James H. "Organizational Mechanisms for Conflict Management in a Large Urban School System." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association annual meeting, New Orleans, February 1973. 9 pages. ED 081 115.

In large city school systems, the district superintendent must act as a "mediator between groups with conflicting interests," according to Lytle. Basing his observations on the Philadelphia school system, which he believes is representative of urban school systems, he points out that district superintendents occupy a position between the central office and the schools. They are thus able to act as conflict managers, attempting to reduce friction between the schools and the central policy-making body. Even though the district superintendent's position embodies little policy-making power, it is absolutely essential in conflict resolution. The superintendent acts both as an interpreter of central office policy and as a voice to the central office for the grassroots level.

Because of their middle position, district superintendents cannot afford to respond strongly to pressures from any side. Instead, they are "in fact agents for the protection of the system and maintenance of the status quo."

Lytle's paper is of interest because he indicates the constructive role that a middle-management position (like that filled by the district superintendent) can play in ameliorating conflict in the school system as a whole.

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Noton, M.; Mitchell, C. R.; and **Janes, F. R.** "The Systems Analysis of Conflict." *Futures*, 6, 2 (April 1974), pp. 114-132. EJ 100 981.

Although its authors regard their paper as "merely a very speculative start on the seemingly intractable problems of mathematical representation of conflict situations," it nonetheless offers a valuable analysis of those problems, many of which relate to the underdeveloped nature of social science. They point out that social science is not like mathematics in that "the social world is so lacking in theories of processes and structure." It therefore does not readily lend itself to analysis according to a "deterministic model" based on "largely linear relationships." They criticize the use of the computer in gaming and simulation as a useful tool in resolving conflict, though they note its widespread use.

The systems dynamics model advanced in this paper is subject to the weakness of translating social science concepts into quantitative forms, as the authors acknowledge. But the advantage of this model in analyzing community conflict lies in its clear delineation of the relationships among the various factors contributing to, and resulting from, such conflict.

In spite of the tentative nature of the systems model advanced by Noton, Mitchell, and Janes, their analysis of the value of such an approach to conflict is intelligently presented and substantive. They succeed in focusing the issues involved in translating the ambiguities of social phenomena into concrete mathematical terms.

Piele, Philip K. "Conflict Management in Education. ERIC/CEM Research Review." *R & D Perspectives*, (Fall 1971). Eugene: Center for Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon. 4 pages. ED 058 650.

This review of the literature covers most of the major works on conflict management in education published prior to 1971. This research deals with such areas as difference in issue perception between administrators and faculty, the relation between community structure and "conflict propensity," the dominant role played by interracial relations in conflict, and theories investigating solutions to conflict.

Although brief, this review does offer a valuable summary of the earlier research.

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Schmuck, Richard A. "Development of Management Teamwork: National Overview." Paper presented at Educational Managers annual academy, Wemme, Oregon, July 1974. 7 pages. ED 094 456.

Management according to team principles can help to alleviate some of the conflict inevitably arising in complex organizations (such as the schools), according to Schmuck. He states that "two competing social trends" exist from which conflict arises. First, "the *Press of Interdependence*" originates in "the continuing trend of people pressing up closer and closer to more and more people." Second, the *"Press toward Pluralism"* is directed away from cultural homogeneity and toward the definition of separate groups within the society as a whole. So while people are being pushed closer together, in another sense they are being forced farther apart. As Schmuck states, "These countervailing presses . . . give rise to interpersonal and intergroup conflicts."

The "energy" that originates in these conflicts can be constructively channelled, according to this author. One way to accomplish this goal is to utilize management skills that deal with conflict "in a problem-solving way." The teamwork approach, with its "consensus decision-making" process, offers one viable means of dealing constructively with conflict.

Although Schmuck's article does not deal exclusively with conflict, it is interesting to see how management theorists, such as this author, incorporate the notion of conflict into management strategies.

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Schofield, Dee. *Conflict Management in Education. NAESP School Leadership Digest Series, Number Ten.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1975 (prepared by ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon). 32 pages. ED 101 414.

This summary of conflict theory draws on the fields of psychology, sociology, and political science. Schofield recognizes that very little theory of conflict has been generated from the field of education administration. However, such theory is valuable (and even essential) to the education administrator because he needs a framework in which to analyze conflicts that inevitably arise in his daily administrative duties.

This paper reviews psychological theories of perception, aggression and hostility, threat and anxiety, and subjectivity and the judgment process. Sociological patterns of conflict within the community are analyzed according to the theories of James Coleman, whose study of community conflict is a seminal work. Schofield emphasizes that school administrators are as subject to internal psychological pressures (as well as external sociological pressures) as anyone else. And the school itself is as frequently the target of public attention (and hostility) as any other governmental unit, perhaps even more so.

Schofield criticizes those administrators who oversimplify the complexities and ambiguities of conflict situations, warning that in these post-Watergate days, the polarization that leads to labeling the opposition as "enemies" is inappropriate and destructive.

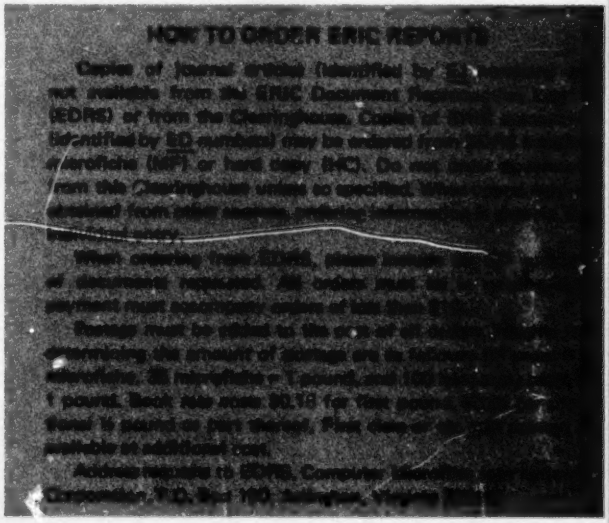
Although its review of conflict theory is brief, this paper at least offers a good starting point for those who wish to do further investigation.

Order as a series of 13 reports from National Association of Elementary School Principals, P.O. Box 9114, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Series price, $24 plus postage. The individual report can be purchased at a cost of $2.50 each.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $1.95. Specify ED number.

Spillane, Robert R. "Cooling or Coping? School-Community Tensions." Speech presented at American Management Association annual conference, New York, August 1972. 12 pages. ED 070 199.

Spillane deals specifically with conflict between the schoo and the community—conflict that often leaves school admi istrators baffled and vulnerable from all sides. He points ou that especially in a politically and ethnically mixed neighbo hood, no action of the administrator satisfies everyone. Te sion (especially racial tension) is reflected in all aspects of th school and community in this "time of heightened ethni awareness," according to Spillane.

Conflict frequently centers around the school because, a he points out, the school is "both more accessible than mo branches of government—and most directly concerned with th



shaping of the future." The school also affects that part of th community not directly involved with its services. The vic tims of juvenile crime, for example, can blame the school fo not controlling potential trouble-makers.

To cope with these conflict-causing factors, the admini trator (especially the superintendent) should follow thre steps, according to Spillane. First, the school should dissem nate information about itself and about its students to th community-at-large. Second, the school should provide per sonnel to facilitate problem-solving. Third, community mem bers should play a part in the decision-making process throug the legal structure of the school system—"where their decision will count."

Spillane's experience as superintendent in a "mixed ethni and racial area" add weight to his recommendations, whic have arisen in his district's attempts to ameliorate communit tensions.

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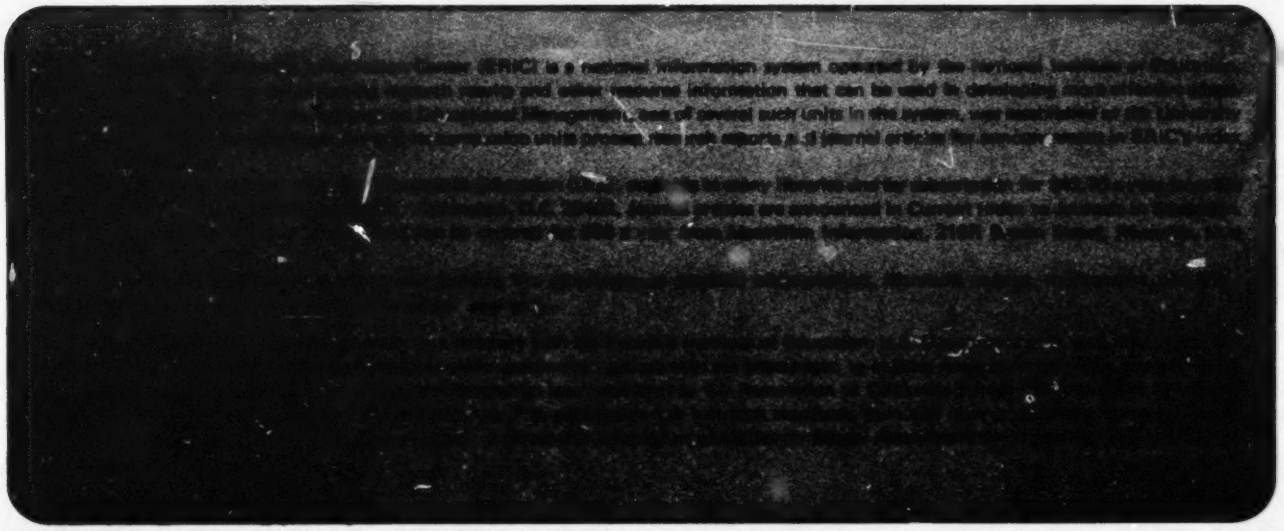

Townsend, Richard G. "Conflict and the Collaborative Process: Antecedents and Consequences of Two Inter-Agency Programs." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association annual meeting, New Orleans, February 1973. 21 pages. ED 074 622.

The conflicts arising from school facilities planning in Boston and Chicago are investigated in this study. Townsend points out that coordination between various governmental units (the schools, city and state governments, and federal funding institutions) is absolutely essential for the successful construction of public schools. He sees the interagency cooperation in Boston and Chicago as portents of the future. No longer can institutions afford to plan and operate in isolation when such major tasks are to be accomplished.

Townsend notes that "subunits will become more dependent on each other as society becomes more sophisticated," and that this increased interdependence will generate new kinds of "policy-making structures" with different "political conflicts."

To analyze these new structures and conflicts, he utilizes a model derived from political science that incorporates "a taxonomy of inter-professional and inter-governmental conflict." Townsend found that "pre-collaboration" conflicts can stimulate interagency cooperation, both among members of the same profession in different governmental units, and among members of different professions. He even recommends that those who wish to encourage interagency collaboration might "nurture or even accelerate" interprofessional and intergovernmental conflict. He also points out that once collaboration is under way, "disagreement may be turned into a stimulant for new mechanisms for group accomplishment."

Townsend's approach to conflict in interorganizational management is interesting, though it is a shame that his prose is so dense and his jargon so obtrusive.

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Weiler, Daniel and **Guertin, Jeane.** ***School-Community Relations and Educational Change. PREP-24.*** Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Communication, 1970. 56 pages. ED 054 536.

The purpose of this report is "to assist school administrators in analyzing and planning policies and programs in the area of community relations." Its authors have selected a group of case studies designed to allow the administrator to anticipate his reactions to various conflict situations and to work out equitable means of resolving these conflicts. Although Weiler and Guertin note that "every school-community relations problem is unique," they contend that the administrator can learn what "***kinds*** of things" work in conflict resolution, even though specific steps cannot be applied to every conflict situation.

They advise the administrator to become familiar with the community's social climate, its economic and political conditions, and the patterns of public support, as well as the educational climate in the district. He should also be aware of the history and importance of different issues confronted by the schools.

Using these factors, the reader is prepared to analyze the specific conflict situations presented in the seventeen case studies. These studies deal with such problems as achieving racial balance in the schools, defining the limits of academic freedom, selecting a new school site, settling conflicts over dress codes, and managing a student strike.

The specificity of this report is commendable. Although the steps generated by analysis of the case studies are not completely applicable to real-world situations, this approach does encourage the administrator to develop a healthy respect for the actual conflicts that he must encounter.

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